App. No. 10/727,276

Amendment Dated: July 13, 2007

Reply to Final Office Action of March 13, 2007

## Amendments to the Claims:

1 (currently amended): A method for representing non-structured features that span other tags in a ML document, comprising:

determining a start <u>feature</u> tag location for a non-structured feature; <u>wherein the non-structured</u> feature spans the other tags in the ML document;

determining an end feature tag location for the non-structured feature; and

placing a start <u>feature</u> tag at the start tag location; wherein the start <u>feature</u> tag is an empty tag that does not <u>overlap include</u> other elements; and

placing an end <u>feature</u> tag at the end <u>feature</u> tag location, wherein the end <u>feature</u> tag is an empty tag that does not <u>overlap include</u> other elements; and wherein the start <u>feature</u> tag and the end <u>feature</u> tag span other tags while maintaining a well formed ML document.

2 (currently amended): The method of Claim 1, wherein the start <u>feature</u> tag and the end <u>feature</u> tag include an identifier attribute that associates the start <u>feature</u> tag and the end <u>feature</u> tag.

3 (currently amended): The method of Claim 2, wherein the identifier attribute is set to a same value within the start <u>feature</u> tag and the end <u>feature</u> tag.

4 (original): The method of Claim 2, wherein the ML document is an XML document.

5 (currently amended): The method of Claim 3, wherein the start <u>feature</u> tag and the end <u>feature</u> tag that span other elements are named differently.

6 (currently amended): The method of Claim 5, wherein the start <u>feature</u> tag and the end feature tag are bookmarks.

7 (original): The method of Claim 6, further comprising, using the bookmarks to create an index a set of documents.

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8 (currently amended): The method of Claim 5, wherein the start <u>feature</u> tag and the end <u>feature</u> tag may be used for at least one function selected from a set comprising: annotating, proofing, range protection, commenting, and permissions.

9 (currently amended): A computer-readable medium for representing nonstructured features that span other tags in a ML document, comprising:

determining locations for a start <u>feature</u> tag and an end <u>feature</u> tag; wherein the location of the start <u>feature</u> tag indicates a starting position for a non-structured <u>feature</u> and the location of the end <u>feature</u> tag represents an ending position for the non-structured feature; <u>wherein the non-structured feature</u> spans the other tags in the <u>ML document</u>; and

placing the start <u>feature</u> tag and the end <u>feature</u> tag at the determined locations, wherein the start <u>feature</u> tag and the end <u>feature</u> tag are empty tags that span other tags within the ML document while adhering to a well formed ML rule.

10 (currently amended): The computer-readable medium of Claim 9, wherein at least one of the start <u>feature</u> tag and the end <u>feature</u> tag includes an identifier that is used to indicate an association between the start <u>feature</u> tag and the end <u>feature</u> tag.

11 (original): The computer-readable medium of Claim 10, wherein the ML document is an XML document.

12 (currently amended): The computer-readable medium of Claim 9, wherein the start <u>feature</u> tag and the end <u>feature</u> tag each include an attribute that is set to a same value indicating the association between the start <u>feature</u> tag and the end <u>feature</u> tag.

13 (currently amended): The computer-readable medium of Claim 12, wherein the start <u>feature</u> tag and the end <u>feature</u> tag are bookmarks.

14 (original): The computer-readable medium of Claim 12, further comprising, using the bookmarks to create an index a set of documents.

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15 (currently amended): The computer-readable medium of Claim 11, wherein the start <u>feature</u> tag and the end <u>feature</u> tag may be used for at least one function selected from a set comprising: annotating, bookmarking, proofing, range protection, commenting, and permissions.

16 (currently amended): A system for representing non-structured features in a ML document, comprising:

an application that is configured to:

parse a word-processor document;

determining locations for a start feature tag and an end feature tag; and

placing a start <u>feature</u> tag and an end <u>feature</u> tag at the determined locations, wherein the start <u>feature</u> tag and the end <u>feature</u> tag are empty tags; wherein the location of the start <u>feature</u> tag indicates a starting position for a non-structured feature and the location of the end <u>feature</u> tag represents an ending position for the non-structured feature; and wherein the start <u>feature</u> tag and the end <u>feature</u> tag span other tags within the ML document while adhering to a well formed ML rule; and wherein the non-structured feature spans the other tags within the ML document;

output the ML document that may be interpreted by applications that understand a ML; and

a validation engine configured to validate the ML document.

17 (currently amended): The system of Claim 16, wherein the start <u>feature</u> tag and the end <u>feature</u> tag includes an identifier as an attribute of the start <u>feature</u> tag and the end <u>feature</u> tag that indicates an association between the start <u>feature</u> tag and the end <u>feature</u> tag.

18 (original): The system of Claim 10, wherein the ML document is an XML document.

19 (currently amended): The system of Claim 18, wherein the start <u>feature</u> tag and the end <u>feature</u> tag may be used for at least one function selected from a set comprising: annotating, bookmarking, proofing, range protection, commenting, and permissions.